



Virginia Commonwealth University  
VCU Scholars Compass

---

Theses and Dissertations

Graduate School

---

2013

**DEVELOPING A MASTERS OF FINE ARTS IN CLASSICAL  
PERFORMANCE FOR CINCINNATI SHAKESPEARE COMPANY:  
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INTO  
AN EDUCATION**

Matthew Johnson  
*Virginia Commonwealth University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

© The Author

---

**Downloaded from**

<https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/3013>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).

© Matthew Lewis Johnson 2013

All Rights Reserved

DEVELOPING A MASTERS OF FINE ARTS IN CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE FOR  
CINCINNATI SHAKESPEARE COMPANY:  
THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INTO AN  
EDUCATION

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

MATTHEW LEWIS JOHNSON  
B.A. Theatre, Morehead State University, 1997

Director: DAVID S. LEONG  
CHAIR AND PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE

Virginia Commonwealth University  
Richmond, Virginia  
April 29, 2013

### Acknowledgement

First and foremost it seems like kismet that the group of people with whom I shared this graduate school experience are here at the same time, this cohort has made me proud to be among their number and blessed by a god I almost believe in. Marisa, Valerie, Terry, Dan, Clayton, Brooke, Joe, Rachel, Michael, Rachel, Robin, Heather, Penny, Matt, Kelly, and Kevin have all been a part of this experience in a way that made it brighter and fuller by offering support, friendship, camaraderie and inspiration. For my children, Emelia Anne and Matthew Oliver, who are my guiding stars and an undying fuel for my pedagogy. I thank Jenny for the challenges she accepted and those that she provides. I thank my parents for their financial, spiritual, and emotional support. For Brian who is always there for his brother. For my siblings who give love both tough and supportive. For Noreen, David and Aaron for being themselves in a way that made it clear to see how this part of the path was to be trod, the bends came quick and the three of them were, each in their way, there to keep the road clear from stones.

When designing the MFA at CSC I consulted with many people who have gone through a similar process, or lived in one as it evolved. My ideas for this program have been influenced in no small part by the frank conversation and illuminating insight of Paul Dennhardt, Catherine Weidner, Colleen Kelly, Greta Lambert, and Marti Steger; as well as my studies in Pedagogy at VCU under David Leong, Noreen Barnes and Aaron

Anderson. Without these fine professional artists and educators this thesis would not exist. My thanks is too small a reward.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Chapter	
1 CHAPTER 1 TRUE AIM.....	1
CSF Resident Company Structure.....	1
CSF Introduces the Young Company.....	4
The Company Collapses.....	5
Young Company Triumphant.....	7
CSC .....	8
Budgets and Worth.....	11
2 CHAPTER 2 THE TARGET.....	14
Part 1 What Has Come Before .....	14
Compare and Contrast .....	30
Comparison Table .....	35
Part 2 Accreditation Standards.....	37
3 CHAPTER 3 THE PATH.....	52
Mission .....	52
Vision .....	52
The Tenets .....	55
Proposed Curriculum.....	56

Curriculum Details .....	59
Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes.....	64
Programmatic Teaching Objectives .....	65
Faculty Structure .....	65
Works Cited .....	67
Appendix.....	69
Vita.....	75

## Abstract

DEVELOPING A MASTERS OF FINE ARTS IN CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE FOR  
CINCINNATI SHAKESPEARE COMPANY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AN  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT INTO AN EDUCATION

By Matthew Lewis Johnson, BA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013

Major Director: David S. Leong  
Chair and Professor, Department of Theatre

The thesis focuses on the development of a fully accredited Masters of Fine Arts in  
Classical Performance degree program for Cincinnati Shakespeare Company (CSC).  
Chapter 1 is a narrative of the author's experience with CSC's Young Company, the  
touring and teaching artist arm of the educational department. This chapter establishes  
culture of the company and the context of the program, the argument for the thesis.  
Chapter 2 is an exploration of existing and defunct MFA programs in Classical  
Performance or related fields of study, the steps toward NAST accreditation and

curriculum development. Chapter 3 is a description of the MFA at CSC laid out semester-by-semester, its vision and mission. The thesis is undertaken with complete cooperation with CSC under Artistic Director Brian Isaac Phillips.

## CHAPTER 1 True Aim

### The Context and Culture of CSC and the Young Company

The author worked at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company (CSC) from 2002-2010 as a resident ensemble member, Company Manager, Artistic Associate and Associate Artistic Director. CSC houses a Resident Ensemble Company made up of ten to twenty professional Equity and non-union actors, many on salary for the entire season, and is committed to this rare and challenging business model. Formed in 1993 as Fahrenheit Theatre Company (FTC), the organization would survive growing pains, two name changes from FTC to Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival (CSF) to CSC, leadership shifts, identity crises, budget woes, the great recession, personnel crises, and more to become the award-winning and financially strong arts institution that it is today. As an introduction to the culture of CSC and to contextualize the evolution of the Young Company and its worth as the foundation of the proposed terminal degree, this chapter is written in the first person narrative form.

#### CSF Resident Company Structure

In its fourth season, when the Fahrenheit Theatre Company changed its name to the Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival, the theatre was made up of a largely volunteer work

force. Almost all of them actors, it was philosophically important and in their best interest to frame the company as a Resident Ensemble Company. Very quickly CSF discovered that this new brand would be a marketable educational tool and in 1997 the education programming began in earnest. CSF offered Two Hours Traffic, two-hour versions of Ohio high school-curriculum-friendly Shakespeare plays that would tour within two hours of downtown Cincinnati. Cast from the Resident Company, the tours cost the host venue \$700 and the actors were paid \$40 per show. With jobs on off-nights and weekends, company members were able to scrape together a living, but the volunteer basis of CSF and its shoestring staff led to a step above community theatre work on stage.

In 1998 CSF moved into its current home, a small art house movie theatre renovated with onstage seating with a capacity of 202 audience members. The Festival was growing more professional but the Resident Ensemble Company was just scraping by. They were being paid for their work but it was threads and patches, they were a Company but not truly in residence. The Resident Company model had served CSF well, becoming its defining attribute, and the leadership took steps to foment its permanency and step up the level of quality on stage in the process. In 1999 there were only four actors left from the original company of twelve, the more the Founding Artistic Director was able to pay his actors the more different his actors became. Everyone in the Resident Company was almost full time but there were still too often schedule conflicts with other employment. The entire Ensemble was touring with the exception of two new members, recent graduates from Ohio State and the only members with MFA degrees. These two actors stood out from the ensemble not only because of their training but also because of their

sense of entitlement. In truth, at the time they were they were more able to fully realize the actor's craft, but this internal class delineation, while logical, was very bad for morale.

In 2000 the Resident Acting Company became full time staff members getting paid a "living wage" of \$350 per week. The duties included all rehearsals and performances for main stage shows, two Two Hours Traffic productions, main stage show strike, In Love With Shakespeare (a forty minute greatest hits collection of love scenes that played schools, libraries and retirement communities), Shakespeariances (a sort of actor-in-residence workshop of durations ranging from ninety minutes to three days) press calls, fund raising events, public relation events, monthly ensemble meetings and any directing or design opportunities that were applicable. Even the two actors with advanced degrees were in the tour van. The typical schedule for the acting ensemble was a 6am tour call at the theatre to travel to a show at 9am, return to the theatre for rehearsal by 12pm. Rehearsal from 12-5pm followed by a dinner break and an evening show call at 7pm; at the bar by 11pm and home by 2am. The ensemble was working 60-hour workweeks as a matter of course and the toll was paid on stage.

The Resident Company Members were young though and by continually working on their craft the actors were sharpening their chops. Resident Company Member (and future Producing Artistic Director) Brian Isaac Phillips who had been a very serious actor in college, rarely playing comedy, found a real talent for lighter material. Had he not been in a resident company he might never have been given the opportunity to stretch those muscles. The two actors with MFA degrees had a season before been standouts but now they were first among equals, the internal class delineation dissipated to the ether

from which it sprang. By the end of that season the entire Ensemble to a person was a stronger actor, they had been tempered into professionals by the sheer hours logged on stage, actors like Phillips with little formal training stood toe to toe with talented and well trained MFA degree holders.

### CSF introduces the Young Company

In 2000 CSF was growing, the constant touring was taking its toll on the resident ensemble. The group was older now, some with advanced degrees, and the model of continually touring with a consecutive mainstage presence was no longer healthy for the actors, the productions, or the bottom line. More and more tours were being requested; these ate into rehearsal time in the afternoons yet it was hard for management to turn down the income. The Resident Company was about to shrink, a few long time members were moving on and hiring new members at full status was financially unfeasible. Making the actors full time proved to be expensive and now the Founding Artistic Director had an out, if he didn't replace those departing Ensemble slots with Company members but with interns.

An idea was proposed, based on the Stratford Festival in Canada, of a touring company of slightly younger actors right out of school who would take on all of the educational responsibilities and play the smaller roles on the mainstage. This would essentially be the freshman year of the ensemble as turnover was more frequent in those days. An internship without being labeled as such, CSF would supply housing, a small stipend and very little tech duties barring strike. The Young Company was born in 2001.

The internal class delineation of a couple of seasons past had become institutionalized. These young actors had the opportunity to hone their craft, not in a lab situation, not a couple of times a semester, not in front of their friends and family but onstage nonstop in front of an actual paying audience. They were on the frontlines fighting the good fight in the educational outreach trenches of the American Regional Theatre. The Young Company had professional actors to look up to, a built in company of mentors, the only problem was that the Resident Company was all in their mid to late twenties; a mentor too close to follow perhaps.

### The Company Collapses

When CSF almost closed its doors in 2002, the company was held together by pure moxie. Much of the staff that stayed were interns at the time and agreed to finish out the duties of their superiors for the length of their contracts at intern pay. The Interim Artistic Director, longtime Resident Company Member Nick Rose, and the Associate Artistic Director, Brian Phillips both worked for actor pay. I had been doing some television work in Atlanta and managed to save up some money so I worked for free for the first few months. It was a time of crisis, the company was limping along and nobody involved had any clue how to actually run things. It was on-the-job training in the extreme. Tensions were high, the stakes were through the roof, and everyone involved was all in.

Like any story, this one is rife with intrigue and back room deals, there are tales untold but known by many, deeds unspoken but remembered by few, there is history and then there is what happened. I will delve no further into the more salacious and

melodramatic aspects of the narrative but bring them up to contextualize the culture of the Company at that time. The most cogent notion to this thesis, and it is foundational in the development of the Young Company, is that for years as we learned how to do what we were doing we operated with a kind of Catastrophe du Jour mentality. It felt as though we were a sham and someone was sure to find out, we were operating from ego, from instinct and bluff just trying to stay afloat and keep our dignity intact. We suddenly got what we wanted, a theatre of our own, but we were a bunch of actors and directors, and no one knew how to run a business. Woefully under qualified, the stink of insecurity was thick in the administration offices, but in the rehearsal hall and on stage we gave it everything we had. Full of bravado, we played the confidence game to win; it was all or nothing. We were living the dream but it was often verging on nightmare, a nightmare of our own anxiety-ridden neuroses. What I realize now is just as the Resident Ensemble and the Young Company like them were tempered in the fires of constant touring and performing on the mainstage, the blue flames of the market and the reality of producing theatre while trying to pay for a Resident Ensemble Company were tempering the leadership of CSF. These were Sisyphean tasks, the business model was unsustainable and like auditioning becomes the real job of the actor, begging for money is the real job of a modern non-profit. Receiving a higher education in artistic compromise, humility, political manipulation and professional existential dread we were such stuff as ulcers were made on.

## Young Company Triumphant

After the collapse and restructuring of CSF, the second Young Company became not only the backbone of the Resident Ensemble Company but in a very real way they saved the theatre. Unable to pay any equity contracts, and only paying the experienced actors sub-union scale, the Festival needed actors to fill several now-vacant leading roles. The Young Company members all agreed to stay on and pull not only their agreed upon weight but the weight of actors twice times their age and experience level. They said yes to whatever was asked of them, they never asked for more money, and though they were technically null and void after the change over this group of people served out their contracts in full. Without their commitment and integrity CSF would have folded.

The following season as the company limped along trying to find its legs under new management Nick Rose ceded the position of Artistic Director to my old friend Brian Isaac Phillips. This happened half way through the tenth season. More shockwaves rattled through the Festival but they subsided quickly. I was the Company Manager at the time, our offices and rehearsal space were in the basement, and daylight was often not a part of our lives.

Here is the important thing: we did it. We had no business running a business, no right to expect success, but we had a belief in what we were doing, a commitment to the ideals of the company, and we made the best art we could make in that time and place. It was the rehearsal hall that got us through those days; there we grew the confidence to make our living from our lives. Sometimes we didn't get paid, sometimes it looked like the lights were going to get turned off, relationships were forged and broken, children were bred and

family members died, life happened and we did it. When we failed we failed hard and when we succeeded we took steps forward. None of us had advanced degrees. We earned our education on the professional stage, and the dysfunctional back stage, of the American Regional Theatre but we never had time to digest what that meant.

This is foundational to the proposed program. Much of my graduate school experience has been about processing my professional career through an educational mindset. I have come to the belief that the lessons gleaned from my time at CSC and the experience of sharpening one's chops in constant performance while processing the experience through technique and history will make for a transformative educational experience. By mindfully sharing the tools, time, and talents of the Resident Ensemble Company, now with ages spanning early thirties to late fifties, as not only a company of actors and artists but also a company of mentors and teachers this program will offer something unique in the educational landscape.

## CSC

For its thirteenth season the Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival rebranded itself Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. It was a reaffirmation of the focus on a Resident Ensemble Company and acknowledgement of the year-round production calendar. Now a union theatre, CSC was not a festival but a part of the cultural landscape, a permanent cultural institution. At the time it was about us walking out of a shaky past and into a strong future, the leadership was strong and the Company confident. Much of our early neuroses had subsided, the offices were renovated, moving from the basement to the

second floor of the building, I initiated and held the position of Artistic Associate to give long time Ensemble members a larger voice in the company, our budgets were growing every year. This led to a series of success related challenges in the Young Company.

With its ranks skewing older for the past few seasons, many Young Company members were now coming out of graduate programs and almost everyone wanted to stay with CSC for as long as we would have them. In the beginning YC members would stay for a year or two on average, as time went on and crises averted, it was not out of the ordinary for YC members to tour for three or even four years. This made for an uneven ground both in experience and in morale; within the YC there was the old familiar internal class delineation, resentments festered between the veteran touring members and the new guard and even between some of the veteran touring members and the Resident Ensemble. When an YC member was touring for more than two years they would often get larger roles on the mainstage and be considered part of the Resident Ensemble. Their pay was still on the YC side though, they were in a kind of limbo, no positions open above and no desire to move backward yet still wanting to work for CSC. Retention was a sore subject as there was no natural out in this model.

Becoming an Actors Equity-affiliated company had its challenges as well. When I joined CSF I had already capped out on the maximum number of Equity Membership Candidate points one could receive, I had to join the union within five years. When the company went union I dumped all of my points and started over, it was in my own best interest to do because I had a full time job and benefits. Within a year and a half I was back at the fifty-point cap and it was time to join the union. By then I was in my thirties

and well experienced, even though it would make it harder to work outside CSC it was the right move. The same could not be said of the Young Company.

In order to work year-round with an equity company an actor must join the Equity Membership Candidate Program. It is a point system where the actor earns one point per week of work, rehearsal or performance, when they accumulate fifty points the actor has five years to join the union. At CSC a young actor just out of college could get their equity card in just over a year of employment. This is a year doing mostly educational touring at a small professional theatre in Cincinnati. Not a good career decision for that young actor, she would not be able to work at any non-union theatres, which is the best way to build a career regionally, nor would she likely be retained at CSC given the Equity minimum salary she would have just priced herself out of the market. Considering the retention issues outlined above, we made an agreement with the union that YC members earned one point for every two weeks work, effectively doubling their lifespan at the company.

All of these issues came to a head during the recession. Almost all corporate development dollars dried up, people were still coming to see shows and individual giving had slowed but the corporate money was gone. Since we could still put butts in the seats CSC took to producing more shows than ever, off night and off site shows were commonplace. The production calendar was stuffed to the breaking point and we were still having trouble making ends meet. The easiest place to cut was the lowest position on the totem pole. The Young Company was provided housing and a small stipend of \$100. During the recession that stipend was dropped to \$50 a week. I showed YC members how

to sign up for food stamps and get their loans deferred, how to access public transportation and how to find cheap parking, but they showed up and we had a good group come through, a few of whom are still at CSC as of this writing. Since that time the stipend has moved upward to now being \$200 a week.

### Budgets and Worth

The model for the Young Company now is that they are provided housing and a \$200 per week stipend. The typical contract is forty-two weeks totaling \$8,400 per actor with six YC members in the typical season costing a total of \$50,400 per year in salary. Housing costs the company \$640 per month with utilities running an average of \$6,000 annually. That is a total of \$13,680 in housing costs added to the salary comes to a total of \$64,080 for the Young Company program. The defined duties of the YC are the Two Hours Traffic tours, *In Love With Shakespeare* (rebranded this season as *Why Shakespeare?*), the Shakesperience, and small roles on the mainstage. The 2012-2013 Board Approved Budget for CSC breaks down the three educational programs as bringing in \$39,750 against an expense of \$64,080 for a loss of -\$24,330. This does not take into account the roles on the mainstage and what those six actors bring to those roles. In the 2011-2012 season the YC were paid an average of \$150 per week for 42 week contracts, with housing still costing the same the total for that year was \$51,480. The educational programs brought in \$36,458 that season for a loss of -\$14,932. Again this does not take into account the mainstage roles played by the YC. It would indeed be impossible to put a price tag on the mainstage presence of the YC, it is where they get to see the seasoned

professional in action, they share scenes with these professionals, it is in the dressing rooms where they have behavior modeled for them that will inform the rest of their careers, here they see what it is to be a professional actor and a member of something bigger than themselves or their career. Their presence on stage, admittedly often the weakest link in any given show, makes the theatre seem bigger its makes the production fuller and gives the director more options with which to tell the story. It is a win-win situation and worth more than hiring a local actor, or worse no one at all, to fill their shoes.

One of the largest conceits of this thesis is that CSC is an education institution that happens to produce plays. Looking at the budget lays this out; according to IRS forms 990 for the year 2009, CSC had an operating loss of -\$5403. There was a production expense of \$663,105 and a production income of \$362,303 for a loss of -\$300,802. The education income that same season was \$123,416 with \$92,665 in expenses for a net gain of \$30,751. The net from fundraising events in the form that year was \$22,473. According to the 2010 IRS 990 the production budget was \$736,863 with an income of \$452,594 for a loss of -\$284,269 while the education department reported expenses of \$101,545 and an income of \$137,925 for a gain of \$36,380. The fundraising events earned \$20,858.

The proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company has the potential to save \$64,080 from the operating budget. CSC would not have to provide housing for the program's cohort, nor would there be a necessary stipend. On top of that savings CSC could see as much as \$300,000 added to the budget through tuition fees for a cohort of twelve at a cost of \$10,000 per semester. That is a total potential of \$364,080 annually.

The biggest boon to CSC, its potential partner institution, and to the Cincinnati area is the gravitas that having an MFA training program in house brings. It is a bold statement to the theatre community at large elevating the brand and the identity of CSC, its partner, and the city. The MFA announces to the culture that the American Regional Theatre is alive and well, that if Cincinnati can support this work that other cities of the same size can too. It says that the work of CSC is not only rigorous but worthy of import, it says that the Resident Ensemble Company is an institution of worth, that the value of what happens on stage resonates deeper through the community and the country, it reveals the potential to spread that value, that worth far and wide. Having the Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company will put CSC on the international theatre map and alert Cincinnati to the other world-class theatre in its midst.

## CHAPTER 2 The Target

### Part 1: What Has Come Before

In this section I will explore existing and defunct programs similar to the proposed Masters of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, we will look at the programs at the Old Globe and the University of San Diego, The Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting (ACA) in conjunction with The George Washington University, the Mary Baldwin College and American Shakespeare Center partnership, the program at Illinois State University with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and the defunct National Theatre Conservatory at the Denver Center. We will look at their mission and or vision statements as well as curriculum design, a summary list of relevant strengths and weaknesses as applies to this thesis, finishing by contrasting each program with and comparing them to the MFA at CSC.

### The Old Globe

A joint venture of The Old Globe and the University of San Diego, the Master of Fine Arts in Dramatic Arts program recruits seven students each year to participate in a two-year, year-round course of graduate study in classical theatre. The mission of the program is to provide students with the skills necessary to pursue successful acting careers. Students' performance work in the Globe's professional productions is the centerpiece of

the training. With only seven students per year, presumably four men and three women, the program claims, “an exceptional amount of personal attention is given to the student’s individual training needs” (Old Globe). The second year students have two-week residencies in London for workshops and research and a showcase presentation in New York and Los Angeles. Each student is awarded full-tuition scholarship and a monthly stipend from the Globe, with financial support in excess of \$80,000 per student.

The stated educational goals for the program are to “Demonstrate the ability to integrate the fundamentals of Stanislavski’s psychological/physical technique of action with the demands of playing texts of heightened language; exhibit proficiency in combining full breath support, rich vocal resonance and articulation precision when speaking texts for the stage; demonstrate skill in analyzing and interpreting dramatic texts, researching literary sources and referencing stage history as fundamental tools in preparing for performance, and demonstrate a variety of physical techniques in order to transform the body into a creative resource for the exploration of text, character and relationships” (Old Globe).

With a sixty-hour requirement to be met within two years, each of the classes in the following schedule carries three credit hours:

“First Year – Fall Semester (12 Units)

THEA 501– Text and Context: Modern Drama

THEA 511– Movement

THEA 521– Acting

THEA 541– Voice and Speech

First Year - Spring Semester (12 Units)

THEA 502– Text and Context: Renaissance Drama

THEA 512– Movement

THEA 522– Acting

THEA 542– Voice and Speech

First Year - Summer (6 Units)

THEA 506– Graduate Colloquium

THEA 53—Old Globe Production

Second Year - Fall Semester (12 Units)

THEA 503– Text and Context: Classical Drama

THEA 513– Movement

THEA 523– Acting

THEA 543– Voice and Speech

Second Year - Spring Semester (12 Units)

THEA 595– Thesis Project

THEA 514– Movement

THEA 524– Acting

THEA 544– Voice and Speech

Second Year - Summer (6 Units)

THEA 532– Globe Production

THEA 533– Globe Production” (Old Globe)

Courses are taken both at the University of San Diego and the Old Globe. The four semesters of acting courses are loosely defined in the published material as: “An individualized, workshop approach to the study of acting and acting styles, focusing on the development of the specific talents of each student. Utilizes exercises and projects designed to expand the actor's capabilities. Special attention is placed on textual analysis. Performance will be an integral part of each course” (Old Globe).

Likewise there are four semesters of movement classes exploring the disciplines of: “period movement, stage combat, laban, ballet, modern dance, and jazz.” Yoga and private Alexander Technique session continue throughout the program but it is unclear whether that is within the Movement Class or in addition to it. There are four semesters of Voice and Speech that focus on “relaxation, breathing, articulation, release of tension, phonetic transcription, and dialects” (Old Globe).

The Text and Context curriculum is split into four different classes: Modern Drama covering from Ibsen to the present, Renaissance Drama covering “the cultural background of the English Renaissance, with an emphasis upon the works of William Shakespeare”, Classical Drama covering the cultural background of a specific "cultural" period - e.g., Greek or Roman, Renaissance, Restoration, and Eighteenth century”, and the

Thesis Project which is an “Independent study with a faculty member in preparation for the program thesis, a solo performance piece. Includes research, consultation, and rehearsal work” (Old Globe).

The program has three hours of “Graduate Colloquium” where the “studies vary from year to year” presumably as curricular breathing room dependent upon any number of factors. The students also get nine hours of credit over three semesters for Globe Production, which is described as “Independent study practicum under the supervision of the Director of the program. Includes rehearsal and performance participation, as well as discussions and seminars with professional company members at the Old Globe Theatre” (Old Globe).

Old Globe relative strengths:

- Credit for performance
- Performance central to training
- Focus on Voice and Movement classes

Old Globe relative weaknesses:

- Summer only season
- Separation of classes from theatre
- Distance of mentors

## The Academy for Classical Acting

The Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting at The George Washington University trains up to 16 students each year. It is a one-year intensive graduate program consisting of 59 credit hours. The program focuses on the performance of Shakespearean and other classical texts.

One of the biggest selling points of the program is that "ACA students receive a unique opportunity to learn and interact with members of the Shakespeare Theatre Company's accomplished classical acting company" (American Academy of Classical Acting). They also promote the fact that the program, aimed at professionals, is only one year long with "an exceptional number of contact hours between students and a professional faculty". The idea being that a working actor cannot spare the three years that earning a traditional MFA would entail. There are one-on-one meetings with individual faculty members scheduled twice a semester to track students' progress. The ACA produces fully staged repertory productions and Showcases in Washington, D.C. and New York City. The annual tuition cost is \$42,900 per student (American Academy of Classical Acting).

The schedule is intense, "its curriculum consists of five full days of classes and rehearsals for twelve consecutive months.... Beginning in mid-late August and finishing in mid-July, the training involves 44 weeks of instruction, with classes beginning at 9 a.m. and ending at 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Actors are in rehearsal on Saturdays as well during the Summer Term. This 59-credit degree is divided into three terms: Fall (17

weeks), Spring (15 weeks) and Summer (12 weeks)” (American Academy of Classical Acting).

The fall acting class focuses on the tragedies and histories; the spring on comedies and a series of Master Classes on Jacobean. These Master Classes are taught by Michael Kahn, artistic director of the Shakespeare Theatre Company. Monologues are continually worked on throughout both semesters and, interestingly, “the ACA faculty in Voice, Alexander Technique, Ear-training and Mask attend acting classes regularly in order to gain a greater awareness of progress and address aspects of the work in an integrated manner” (American Academy of Classical Acting). The focus in Text class for both semesters is on iambic pentameter and scansion. The work begins technically at first and moves into the realm of scansion as character clues later in the year. There is also a separate speech class three ninety-minute sessions a week in the fall and up to six hours a week in the spring with breakout sessions supplementing the classwork.

In the fall there are three hours of weekly group instruction in the Alexander technique, applying the work to voice and scene work. In the winter they have weekly half-hour private instruction, and the Alexander teacher attends rehearsals in the spring. There is a ninety-minute Movement class that meets thrice weekly in the fall and twice weekly in the winter and spring. This class is focused on Pilates and strengthening the body. The ACA also has a class focused on Stretch on Friday afternoons for ninety minutes. “Students will discover their body’s natural harmony and balance through focused breathing and release techniques. This course challenges each student, address individual

needs and creates a personal stretch program to help maintain overall physical wellness” (American Academy of Classical Acting).

In the theory and history class, Topics in Theatre, students utilize primary sources from Elizabethan, Restoration, and Jacobean eras to “examine the historical world in which the plays were written as well as the imaginary worlds created in the plays themselves.” There are short writing assignments “that will serve as a basis for the final written component of the program, in which the student focuses on a particular character or play” (American Academy of Classical Acting).

In Combat class the student will come to “understand how classical weapons were historically used and how they are safely used for the stage...Special emphasis is given to acting the fight, bringing meaning and intent to the physical actions and how to develop a fight to serve the play. Each participant will earn their Actor Combatant Certifications in the Society of American Fight Directors.” Intent on making “the body the primary instrument of expression rather than the face, the Mask class aims to “eliminate inhibiting habitual patterns,” teaching the performer “how to move with power and presence and deeper understandings of spatial dynamics.” There is a class in Clown where the curriculum is “a daring adventure, in which we open our fragile hearts in search of fun. The honesty and openness we find in Clown will inhabit all of our work” (American Academy of Classical Acting).

ACA relative strengths:

- Centrality of “Ear-Training” in voice class

- Clown and Mask in Movement
- Program intensity

ACA relative weaknesses:

- One year program lacks time on task
- No mainstage experience
- Training and performance separation

#### Illinois State University

Illinois State University offers a Masters of Fine Arts in Acting and the department is also the home of the summer Illinois Shakespeare Festival. This is the educational arm of the Festival and its main production capacity for the academic year. The MFA has program recently been re-tooled to focus more on “an acting technique that fuses our modern, Stanislavski-based tradition with the demands of Shakespeare’s poetic, heightened language.” The MFA cohort has a Professional Assistantship as the year-round representatives of the festival as an outreach company. The mission of the program is “The Master of Fine Arts in Acting provides the modern generation of Theatre artists with the skills, vision, and intellectual rigor to grapple with the mental, emotional, physical and vocal demands of extant and emerging classical texts in the 21st century” (College of Fine Arts).

The backbone of the degree is one hour each semester in Thea 501 MFA Portfolio. This is an ongoing representation of accumulated knowledge, skills, and

materials gained or produced while in the program. There is also an advisory capacity to the Portfolio. This body of work stands in place to the traditional thesis and includes a comprehensive exam in lieu of a thesis. Aside from this the curriculum is more open than other programs looked at so far, students will study “the Alexander Technique; Linklater, Berry, Lessac & Fitzmaurice Voicework®; and Laban, mask work and stage combat training...Students work in the studio five hours a day, four days a week, plus evening rehearsals for performance projects, which run from 7 to 11 p.m., five or six nights a week, with one day off per week” (College of Fine Arts).

Illinois State has an interesting focus on working with actors who have a “dual interest in classical training and civic engagement...the type of theatre artist for whom educational and community outreach is not secondary to professional theatre, but equally important and enriching.” To this end the cohort devises work for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival that is applicable to an upper level education curriculum. The program’s aim is to educate professional artists who “interpret and reinterpret the classics within an American aesthetic for the 21st century. This emerging aesthetic is uniquely muscular, vital, intellectually passionate, and infused with an insatiable curiosity about what it means to be human”.

“Students interested in becoming teaching artists may craft an individual focus in teaching by shadowing master acting, voice, and/or movement teachers and assisting faculty coaches on major productions. All students will take a course in acting pedagogy in order to delve deeply into the theories and practices of exemplary teachers of our art.”  
(College of Fine Arts)

ISU relative strengths:

- Aesthetic principles of the “study of what it means to be human”
- Mentorship by shadowing teachers
- Shakespeare Festival touring

ISU relative weaknesses:

- Mainstage season is summer only
- Mentorship in pedagogy rather than professional performance
- ISF Artistic Director on faculty points to lack of autonomy

Mary Baldwin College and the American Shakespeare Center

Mary Baldwin College has partnered with the American Shakespeare Center to offer a two-year Master of Letters program that continues into an optional Masters of Fine Arts in the third year for a degree in Shakespeare and Performance. The first two years are marked by a scholarly approach to the work and capped with a thesis project that combines writing and performance. In order to continue to the MFA the student must interview for the program.

The approach is four pronged, with classes divided into Acting, Directing, Teaching and Dramaturgy:

“Performance courses include

REN 531: The Performance of the Language;

REN 550: Voice;

REN 556: The Body in Performance;

REN 660: Acting for the Early Modern Stage and various stage combat and clown courses

Directing courses include

REN 553: Directing 1;

REN 630: Visual Design on the Early Modern Stage;

REN 650: Directing II

Teaching courses include

REN 510: Shakespeare and Textual Culture,

REN 551: Classroom Staging;

REN 557: Shakespeare's Contemporaries.

Dramaturgy, the art of writing for the theatre, unites many disparate disciplines. At MBC, we offer a variety of dramaturgy related courses, unified by REN 670: Dramaturgy”

(Shakespeare and Performance)

The structure of the degree is thirty-six hours for the Master of Letters, nine of which are electives, and the more tightly constricted thirty additional hours of credit for the Master of Fine Arts. The MFA is designed as a season of theatre produced by the cohort. This season of theatre also provides the material that goes into the shared thesis project: “Working with resident and guest faculty, MFA degree candidates dramaturg, rehearse, direct, and perform four to five early modern and early modern inspired pieces over the

course of the calendar year. Each student will also contribute a chapter to a collectively composed “Company Book” thesis project that chronicles the research into and performance of the company repertory but also explores a particular theme as directed by program faculty.” Each avenue of study in this last year has its own course as we see below in the requirements for the MFA:

“Minimum GPA of 3.3; 66 semester hours, including the 36 earned for the MLitt degree;

Summer 1: 2012

REN 810 Company Management (3 s.h.)

REN 811 Company Marketing (3 s.h.)

Fall Term: 2012

REN 812 Company Acting A (3 s.h.)

REN 813 Company Directing A (3 s.h.)

REN 814 Company Dramaturgy A (3. s.h.)

REN 815 Thesis A (3 s.h.)

Spring Term: 2013

REN 822 Company Acting B (3 s.h.)

REN 823 Company Directing B (3 s.h.)

REN 824 Company Dramaturgy B (3. s.h.)

REN 825 Thesis B (3 s.h.)” (Shakespeare and Performance)

Mary Baldwin relative strengths:

- Final year as season of theatre
- Thesis “Company Book”
- MFA season builds ensemble

Mary Baldwin relative weaknesses:

- Scholarship heavy
- MFA Season likely skewed toward the academy rather than the market
- ML an academic degree more useful for a dramaturg than an actor

The National Theatre Conservatory

The now defunct National Theatre Conservatory (NTC) was a stand-alone educational institution chartered into existence by Congress in 1984 (Moore). It partnered with the Denver Center Theatre Company (DCTC) in the same building, the gigantic Denver Center for the Arts. The mission of the program was “to provide gifted students from across the nation the opportunity to develop their talents and skills within the challenging environment of a performing arts center and to prepare them for active careers in the American theatre and in the film and television industries” (Denver Center Theatre Company). In its final years the students received full scholarships with financial aid in excess of \$100,000 per student.

The first year of study was on the craft of acting in general; it wasn't until the second year that the program focused on Shakespeare and the classics with an apprenticeship with the DCTC acting company. The students were used either as understudies or in actual roles in DCTC productions under the auspices of the Theatre Apprentice Program (TAP). The first semester began with improvisational techniques and Chekhov scenes, and then the acting class moved to continuing exercises based on the teachings of Stanislavsky, Uta Hagen, Michael Chekhov and Sandy Meisner. Scene study started with American writers then progressed on to Shaw, Molière, "Shakespeare and physical transformation techniques" (Denver Center Theatre Company). There were classes in Rehearsal/Performance, Music and Character, Kinesthetic Training, Low-Flying Trapeze, Dance, Yoga, Stage Combat, Social Dramaturgy, Voice, Speech, and Text. Additionally there were private coaching sessions with NTC faculty were called Tutorials and there were weekly screenings of films and recorded stage performances called Great Performances in Film.

The second year was focused on the classics but also in the production of new work, the NTC was interested in creating self-sufficient theatre artists who were able to respond to existing texts: "During the second year, a great deal of emphasis is placed on the classics and the development of new work. Projects include Shakespeare, the Greeks, Brecht plays, musicals and original work developed by the students using performance art techniques and multi-media. Students also develop a solo Shakespeare project, involving the intensive study of a particular character from the canon" (Denver Center Theatre Company). Classes included Acting, Rehearsal/Performance, TAP, Professional Seminar,

TV and Film Training, Kinesthetic Training, Low-Flying Trapeze, Stage Combat, Yoga, Dance, Voice, Speech, Text, Tutorials, Great Performances in Film, and Fundamentals of Play Directing.

The third year students spent most of their time in TAP for which they were offered Equity contracts. At the end of TAP they would return “to the conservatory to complete their training by performing two major productions with full production values in repertory. This Third-Year Repertory plays to the public in one of the DCPA’s theatres. Professional voice-over CDs and videotapes of on-camera work are prepared for each student before they travel to New York to present showcase audition scenes for an audience of directors, agents, casting directors and managers” (Denver Center Theatre Company).

NTC relative strengths:

- Final year is production-centered
- Development of solo Shakespeare show
- Equity card earned

NTC relative weaknesses:

- Lack of programmatic focus
- Classes like low-flying trapeze
- Lack of University Partnership

## Compare and Contrast

In this section the author will highlight similarities between what each of these programs offer and the proposed Masters of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company, as well as look at what makes the MFA at CSC stand apart.

### Old Globe

The program at the Old Globe is similar to the proposed MFA at CSC in many ways, the set curriculum, the credit for and centrality of performance, the concentration on Shakespeare both in curriculum and performance, the Text and Context class split into sections, the focus on Voice and Movement classes. These similarities are inherent in the design of any curriculum designed around a professional production schedule. The Old Globe produces mostly in the summer so their production credits come at the end of the program and the students are the backbone of the ensemble. CSC produces year round with its own resident ensemble who will serve as models and mentors for the MFA cohort, the students will be constantly performing and refining their craft in the educational programming with opportunities on the mainstage in their second year. The location of classes are split between the Old Globe and the University of San Diego, a fragmentation would surely occur between the resident company and the MFA cohort were this to manifest itself at CSC. Budgetary divides between The Old Globe and CSC are wide, so while the concept of full scholarships and stipends for every student is something to aim for, it is not realistically feasible as of this writing.

## ACA

The Academy for Classical Acting is a one-year program, and regardless of its intensity, the author posits that time on task is more important than any amount of cramming. Otherwise the structure of curriculum in the program is solid. The concept of Ear-Training when dealing with verse is one that resonates, as does the Clown and Mask work. However the lack of mainstage experience with the Shakespeare Theater is a major drawback. The MFA at CSC is very interested in the idea that one learns by doing, chops can be grown in the classroom but they can only be sharpened in performance. The touring programs set the actor up for success on the mainstage. The ACA seems very intent on training being the focus and that training and performance are to be kept separate. This notion is an anathema to the MFA at CSC.

## ISU

Illinois State has a similar aesthetic to the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. The “study of what it means to be human”, a stated aim of the ISU MFA program, could be said to encompass the very meaning of theatre. This notion is very closely related to the philosophy held by the MFA at CSC that humans are creatures built for meaning-making. This also informs importance of the educational outreach from both companies. The Illinois Shakespeare Festival touring arm is similar to CSC’s Two Hours Traffic, the emphasis on community engagement through those tours is of a piece. The shadowing of teachers is a very interesting idea as

well and is very much in line with the Apprenticeship model from which the MFA at CSC stems. The mentorship is in pedagogy rather than professional performance however; at CSC the mentorship is rooted in the Resident Ensemble. The summer mainstage season of the Illinois Shakespeare Festival coupled with its artistic director being on faculty at ISU makes the theatre seem like an extension of the school rather than the other way around. This relationship is antithetical to the conceit of this thesis.

### Mary Baldwin College

The most intriguing aspect of the ML/MFA at Mary Baldwin College with the American Shakespeare Center is the thesis project. In an otherwise scholarship-heavy degree, the design of the final year as a season of theatre capped by the shared thesis project of a “Company Book” speaks to something at the heart of the MFA at CSC. It gets at something essential about the theatrical form and the practice of producing historical texts. The communal nature of the experience and the opportunity to reflect disparate points of view within the same context is revelatory. It can potentially serve as both a capstone for the training and a container for the identity of the cohort at that time, the view from inside the artistic process through the eyes of its next generation of practitioners. This sets up the paradigm of processing the meaning we create as we make it, we can make what we mean and mean what we make. Through this process we can inspire a more responsible artist, one who can fully embody their responsibilities to the other, to the self, and to the work. For a professional company to have a “Company Book” or something like it prepared every year offers a sort of internal stock-taking that could be invaluable to

mindful leadership. The nature of the ML degree makes it inapplicable to the MFA at CSC and it can conceivably skew the production of the MFA season toward producing theatre more at home in the museum than the theatrical marketplace.

## NTC

The NTC at the DCPA was by all accounts a robust program. It was all encompassing trying to impart as much knowledge and experience in three years as possible. While this lacks a certain focus when compared to the MFA at CSC it did have a class in Trapeze. Two years of Low Flying Trapeze, one can imagine how lessons in risk, presence, trust, being in the moment, and craft can be teased out of this study but the fact of it outside of circus studies is frankly flabbergasting. Perhaps this points to the lack of University partnership, the autonomy of the NTC allowed it to follow interesting avenues of thought. The third year being so production-centric is very similar to the MFA at CSC and the Equity Card being offered is something to be commended. It is the solo Shakespeare show developed in the second year that is most tempting to assimilate in the curriculum of the MFA at CSC. Upon reflection it seems to belong in a different program than the one being developed here. It speaks to many of the author's artistic sensibilities but would turn the center of the program away from the resident ensemble. It is similar to ISU and Illinois Shakespeare Festival's work in community engagement. Perhaps the cohort could assimilate these ideas into a first year project reworking the *Why Shakespeare?* script, it was often tinkered with under the *In Love with Shakespeare* iteration.

Much of the research into these programs has bolstered the curriculum already designed for the MFA at CSC, and many good ideas were inspired that would not have been considered. The situation of CSC as a Resident Company defines the philosophy of the MFA. It drives the pedagogy, the curriculum, and the value of what we are going to inspire in students. In the following section as National Association of Schools of Theater Accreditation Standards are addressed the curriculum and CSC will be put to the test.

	Mission	Curricular focus	Thesis Project	Professional Performance Opportunity	Mentorship Opportunities	Time to Complete	EMC Points Equity Card	Standout Curriculum
Old Globe	To provide students with the skills necessary to pursue successful acting careers	Shakespeare Performance	Solo Performance	Summer Season at Old Globe	During summer show, nothing formalized	2 years including summers	EMC points	Text and Context
ACA	A training ground for the next generation of theatre artists and a model provider of high quality educational content for students and scholars	Shakespeare Performance	Written Project	None	Nothing Formalized	1 year	None	Mask and Clown, Ear Training
ISU	Provides the modern generation of Theatre artists with the skills, vision, and intellectual rigor to grapple with the mental, emotional, physical and vocal demands of extant and emerging classical texts in the 21st century.	Acting	Cumulative Portfolio Project, and Comprehensive Exam	School tours and summer with ISF	Shadowing teachers	3 years	None	Tours

	Mission	Curricular focus	Thesis Project	Professional Performance Opportunity	Mentorship Opportunities	Time to Complete	EMC Points Equity Card	Standout Curriculum
MBC	Provides the modern generation of Theatre artists with the skills, vision, and intellectual rigor to grapple with the mental, emotional, physical and vocal demands of extant and emerging classical texts in the 21st century.	Shakespeare and Renaissance Performance	Collective “Company Book” Project	None	None	3 years	None	Season of Theatre as Curricular Foundation
NTC	To provide gifted students the opportunity to develop their talents and skills within the challenging environment of a performing arts center and to prepare them for active careers in the American theatre and in the film and television industries.	Acting	Solo Performance and Written project	Third year as company member of DCT	During 3 <sup>rd</sup> year, nothing formalized	3 years	Equity Card	Low-Flying Trapeeze (!)
CSC	Professional hands-on training for the classical actor, housed in a professional classical theatre with a Resident Ensemble Company.	Shakespeare Performance	Collective Creative/ Historical Project	Throughout the program: Educational touring, understudy, and second year Resident Company Member	Formalized meetings with mentors, understudied actors, the Program Director and Apprenticeship leader	2 years	EMC Points and possible membership	Educational Production, Voice, Movement, History and Context, Understudy, Apprentice

## Part 2: Accreditation Standards

It is important to that the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance be fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). The following is a direct quotation from the NAST website that speaks to the significance of this accreditation:

Accreditation is a non-governmental system of academic review. It is a process which periodically evaluates and produces an independent judgment by peers about the extent to which an institution or program achieves its own educational objectives and meets the standards established by an Association. Standards address operational and curricular issues fundamental to educational quality.

The granting of accredited Membership by the Commission on Accreditation signifies that an institution has successfully demonstrated compliance with the procedures, standards, and guidelines of the Association. Integral to this voluntary process is ongoing, regularized self-evaluation and peer review.

Accreditation, in practical terms, is a stamp of approval, a sign that an institution ascribes to, believes in, and has met an external set of basic criteria for the programs it offers. In some cases, accreditation assists in the transfer of credits from one institution to another. In all cases, it indicates that threshold standards are adhered to in a fashion that provides a base of academic strength and operational integrity.

There are several requirements to meet the NAST Accreditation standards and partnering with a University or College would cover most of the basic ones. The NAST verbiage is well in line with the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company; according to the NAST Handbook 2012--2013, “The primary purpose for all institutions, whatever types of programs they offer, should be to provide the best possible environment for education and training in theatre. Such an environment should foster an understanding of the arts and an attitude of respect for their

potential contribution to society” (NAST 59).

The following section will cover the NAST accreditation standards as they apply to the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. We will begin with the most specific and digestible standards, those that apply to the Master of Fine Arts in Acting, then we will back out and take a wide view focusing on the thirteen Basic Criteria for Membership point by point, and finish with an overview of the remaining standards from which the author will highlight the most relevant concepts and specifics as they apply to this thesis.

#### B. Specific Master of Fine Arts Degrees

##### 1. The Master of Fine Arts in Acting

a. The graduate must demonstrate advanced professional competence in acting including, but not limited to:

(1) The ability to employ a broad range of acting knowledge and skills in the creation and presentation of roles.

(2) The ability to perform in plays of various types and from various periods.

(3) The acquisition of advanced understanding and capabilities in voice and speech, movement, and play analysis.

(4) A working knowledge of historical, critical, and theoretical content and the ways they inform playwriting and dramatic writing, the creation of roles, and other aspects of production.

b. The student must perform regularly and should have at least two significant roles in full-length, public productions during the period of study.

c. The program must include requirements and opportunities to realize the expectations in a. and b. immediately above as well as those in Section XV.A., items 2., 3., 4., and 7 (NAST 114).

These points are very straightforward and clear. The proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company encapsulates every one of these standards in the design of the program. Below are those in Section XV.A., items 2., 3., 4., and 7 as listed above.

## XV. SPECIFIC TERMINAL DEGREES

### A. All Master of Fine Arts Degrees...

#### 2. Credit Requirements.

An M.F.A. program normally requires three years of full-time graduate study and involves a minimum of 60 semester credit hours or 90 quarter hours. As part of this course of study, internships (off-campus) under professional conditions are strongly recommended.

#### **3. General Requirements.**

Graduates of M.F.A. programs must exhibit exceptional skill in theatre practice and a well-developed personal aesthetic. The competencies outlined below are combined and synthesized to achieve this result. The standards do not require a specific course for each competency.

- a. Advanced professional competence in some aspect of theatre practice as exemplified by a considerable depth of knowledge and achievement demonstrated by a significant body of work.
- b. A breadth of understanding in theatre and any appropriate related disciplines, the ability to think independently, and to integrate and synthesize information associated with high levels of practice in an area of specialization.
- c. Awareness of current issues and developments that are influencing the principal field(s) of study, and professional ability and clear potential to contribute to the practice and advancement of the field(s).
- d. Writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to the theatre communities and the public.
- e. Advanced capabilities with technologies normally utilized in the creation of work in the field(s) or area(s) of specialization.
- f. An understanding of professional ethics and practice associated with the major field.
- g. A basic knowledge of information resources associated with work and analysis in the major field(s) of study.

#### 4. Program Components and Curricular Structure.

Specific programs and procedures applicable to awarding the M.F.A. degree are determined by the institution. Standards and guidelines providing a framework for these specific decisions are outlined in Section XII.C.

To meet the requirements in Section XV.A.3. above and the standards for specific programs in Section XV.B. below, the essential components of the M.F.A. are:

- a. Studies in a major field associated with the creation and/or presentation of theatre. Requirements to fulfill competency development in the major shall occupy at least 65% of the curriculum.
- b. Advanced, analytically- or academically-oriented theatre studies in areas related to and supportive of work in the major field such as, but not limited

to, history, dramatic literature, theory, criticism, critical studies, dramatic literature, and performance studies.

Requirements in one or more of these areas normally occupy at least 10% of the curriculum. When preparation for teaching is a significant goal of a particular program or student, the requirements in these areas should be 20%.

c. Opportunities for performance, production, and management experiences in a variety of formal and informal settings as appropriate for the student throughout his or her course of study. For those students enrolled in programs or otherwise receiving a commitment from the institution to help them prepare for a career in teaching, instructional opportunities must be provided. Normally, experiences such as exposure to professional theatre productions, interaction with guest artists, and the programming of professional residencies (of individual artists or theatre companies) are critically important in the education of the M.F.A. student....

7. Student Evaluation and Retention.

Evaluation of the student's development and progress toward advanced professional competence, and retention in the program must be provided no less than once every semester or once every two quarters (NAST 113).

At this point the standards start to thicken, becoming self referential within the document itself, and from here on it only gets more so. Still the essential fact remains that the design of the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company meets each one of these initial standards for a Masters of Fine Arts in Acting.

#### Partner Institutions and the Basic Criteria

Now we take a wider view with the conceit that in order to meet many of the larger standards CSC will need to partner with a University or other institution of higher education. According to the National Association of Schools of Theatre Handbook 2012-2013, there are thirteen Basic Criteria for Membership, listed below with periodic notation. The notation will focus on how CSC may already meet the criteria, how CSC can take steps to meet the criteria, or how a university partnership would be required in order to

meet them. This will illuminate both the need for CSC to partner with an accredited University and the value that CSC presents to that University as a partner educating institution. After responding to the thirteen Basic Criteria I will report on the relevant concepts and specific points of the remaining standards as they apply to the proposed program.

Applicants for accreditation as degree-granting members are two-year, four-year, or five-year undergraduate or graduate level institutions. Accredited institutions shall meet the following Basic Criteria for Membership:

1. The institution shall maintain a curricular program of education and training in theatre.
2. The institution shall offer at least one complete degree program, e.g., Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Arts with a major in Theatre, et al., or shall provide the theatre component of a degree program offered in conjunction with an accredited degree-granting institution.
3. The institution shall have graduated at least one class of students who have been through the institution's own program from beginning to final year, and another class shall be in readiness subject to examination.

The first two criteria could be met by either a University partnership or CSC, the third is time contingent and would be met by the University or after the first year of the program.

4. Institutions offering one or more graduate programs as their only degree programs shall have graduated at least two students from at least one graduate program that meets all applicable standards, and shows evidence of continuing enrollment. If institutions offer undergraduate and graduate programs, graduate programs must have graduate students matriculated or in residence, or have received Plan Approval from the Commission on Accreditation.

Depending on the institution with which CSC partners, this one takes care of itself after the first class is through. The key phrase here is "received Plan Approval from the Commission on Accreditation", this means with approval of the Plan for curriculum from

the Commission on Accreditation this could be met at the outset.

5. The institution's legal authority shall be stated clearly in its published materials as identified by its charter, authority to grant degrees, structure of control, profit or non-profit status, and affiliation, if any, with a parent or sibling organization.

This is met by a University partnership; indeed this lays out the basic need for the partnership from CSC's point of view.

6. All policies regarding admission and retention of students, as well as those pertaining to the school's evaluation of progress, shall be clearly defined in literature published by the institution.

CSC would meet this provision on its website under the Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company banner.

7. All tuition, fees, and other charges, as well as all policies pertaining thereto, shall be clearly described in the institution's published literature.

Covered by a university partnership and by CSC, the University would have its own fees which would be linked to from the CSC website and the tuition structure would be laid out for the public on the same page. All printed literature that did not include this would reference the website.

8. Faculty members shall be qualified by educational background and/or professional experience for their specific teaching assignments. The institution shall list its faculty in its published literature.

This gets at the heart of what makes CSC the ideal theatre for a MFA program. The Resident Ensemble is made up of several MFA holding Equity members with at least twenty years professional experience; they are the archetypical teacher for the hands on practical instruction that the curriculum is based in. All full time teachers will have a

terminal degree. Those occasional part time teachers or guest artists without a terminal degree would attain reciprocity through the decades of professional experience in the field. No one without expertise in his or her field would teach at the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

9. The institution shall have facilities and equipment commensurate with the needs of its educational program.

Covered by CSC, all the facilities for classes and day to day lab work is provided for on location at CSC's offices, rehearsal space, theater and storage facility. The company would need to buy things like mats, swords, masks and sundry smaller items but the basic facilities are already in existence.

10. The institution shall have library space and resources commensurate with the needs of its educational program.

This criterion requires a University partnership; CSC has a small library of related materials and books but not enough to claim meeting this standard and the standards of libraries as outlined later in the NAST Handbook.

11. The institution shall demonstrate a commitment to a program of continuous self-evaluation.

Covered by CSC, an annual review of all staff and ensemble members is already in place, it would only take a slight modification of the review process to apply the same parameters to the program. The mission of the program would fit under the umbrella of CSC's mission and would guide all reviews hand in hand with the program's employee handbook.

12. The institution shall be licensed or chartered to operate as required by local and state legal codes. The institution shall meet all legal requirements to operate wherever it conducts its activities. Multipurpose institutions

offering degrees in theatre and in other disciplines shall be accredited by the appropriate regional or institutional accrediting agency.

This can only be met by a partnership with a University.

13. The institution shall provide (or, in the case of foreign studies programs, be responsible for) all coursework or educational services to support its educational programs, or demonstrate that any cooperative or contracted coursework or educational services are provided by an outside institution or organization having accreditation as an entity by a nationally recognized accrediting agency (NAST 51).

Under the parameters of this proposal CSC will provide all instructors, coursework and curriculum for the Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

#### Relevant Standard Requirements

It is at this point that analysis of the NAST Handbook in a point-by-point manner becomes impossible. Having covered in detail the topics most apropos to the thesis the author now shifts to highlighting the more relevant ideas and specific standards. The second section relates to Purposes and Operations. Much of this section is about the linear focus of intent or through line and transparency of the program. The vision, mission, goals, objectives and action plans are the center of the Purposes, ensuring that there is a clear structure of guiding principles for the program that narrow down to concrete action plans. The following chapter of this thesis deals with proposed mission and vision statement as well as initial goals and action plans.

The broad view on this section is that the program and the University need to be inline with one another and stay focused on the shared definition of what the program is. The language needs to be wide angled enough to encompass the concerns of both institutions without negating the viewpoint of either. It must be transparently educational and clear in its intention. The same transparency applies to the finances; the program would need to be periodically audited.

Several specific points from Purposes and Operations section need to be kept in mind: lab classes are required, there need to be at least three full-time equivalent resident faculty, there must be a clear budget that is implemented with transparency, evidence of past and potential financial health, projected budgets that are sufficient to sustain the program from year to year, governance and administrative duties and responsibilities must be clear, there must be a well-defined chain of command and a strong understanding of assumed responsibilities.

The largest subheading in section II is E. Faculty and Staff covering credentials, class loads, appointment, evaluation, advancement, class size, ratio of student to teacher and development. Given the small size of the cohort and the curriculum design, these standards are all covered by the nature of the proposed program. The sub-headings on Facilities and Libraries were covered above in the Basic Criteria for Membership.

Section H covers Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record-Keeping, and Advisement. Recruitment goals, policies and procedures should be clear and ethical. Retention policies should be clear, fair and appropriate; communication about retention

and graduation should be an open channel. Recommendation and advisement should be likewise clear, fair, and apt.

The next section covers Published Materials and Web Sites. Basically the standard is that everything published should be clear and concise and that, on at least a biennial basis, the program publishes pretty much everything: purposes, size and scope, curricula, faculty, administrators and trustees, locale, facilities, costs and refund policies, rules and regulations for conduct, all quantitative, qualitative, and time requirements for admission, retention, and completion of programs and degrees and other credentials, academic calendar, grievance and appeals procedures and accreditation status with NAST and other appropriate accrediting agencies. Theatre units also “maintain published documents of sufficient clarity and detail to facilitate understanding about all aspects of their work among administrators, faculty, students, parents, and other constituencies” (NAST 66). Virtually every official procedure, protocol, requirement, definition, policy, criterion or agreement that is in effect needs to be published. Luckily the ease and relative inexpensive nature of a website gives the modern educational institution a leg up when it comes to meeting these standards.

There is a short section on Community Involvement and publishing any formal relationships and policies that are related to curricular offerings followed by Articulation with Other Institutions. This points to two assets that CSC brings to a partnership, its involvement as an “Other Institution” with the community. The Young Company serves twenty four thousand school children annually in their educational touring programs. I will elaborate on this in the following chapter.

Section L. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections lays out the importance of framing the educational experience. From resource allocation, to programs and services, to reviews and evaluations these standards cover a wide breadth of how the program manifests itself. As an educational entity within an active professional theater it is important to remember, “the theatre unit shall demonstrate that the educational and artistic development of students is first among all evaluative considerations” (NAST 68). This is the main difference between the Young Company’s context at CSC now and how the company would need to contextualize the MFA students. The students would have a set of responsibilities to the organization but the organization, through the program, would have a set of responsibilities to the students. It is an internal paradigm shift that must be made meet this standard and to serve the constituency of the program.

CSC already meets most of the Evaluation, Planning, and Projections standards in the way the company operates. There are systems set up for internal evaluation, projections, and planning that would be easily and fluidly adapted to meet what is required by NAST. It is assumed that the partner institution would have these systems in place for their current programs. As important as this section is, it is imperative that this recommendation be a guiding principle: “Over reliance on quantitative measures is inconsistent with the pursuit of quality in the arts. The higher the level of achievement, the more strongly this pertains” (NAST 68).

The third main section relates to Theatre Program Components, the first section of which is focused on credit and time requirements. In the proposed semester structure, a MFA must have a minimum of sixty credit hours. One credit hour is usually defined as

three hours of work per week for fifteen to sixteen weeks. In a lecture class that can be broken down into one hour of in-class time, or recitation, and two hours of preparation per hour of credit, for a lab or studio class each hour of credit equates to two or three fifty minute class periods. There are standards for transfer policies, which in the proposed structure most likely do not apply. Transcripts must be reflective of all hours earned and all policies must be reflected in a published format.

The following three sections aim at allowing sufficient time on task to produce the desired and expected competencies, making sure that there is a logical and functioning relationship between curriculum and the program's purposes, and assuring that any curricular changes that occur do not impede the student's experience of program continuity. The requirements of residence are also covered and would be fulfilled by the nature of the MFA.

The next section is important enough that I am going to quote it directly:  
“F. New Programs (*always applicable*) 1. Institutions planning to (a) offer new programs or (b) offer a program for the first time, must receive Plan Approval from the Commission on Accreditation as applicable, before the matriculation of students 2. Institutions planning to offer a master's or doctoral degree for the first time should inquire of the National Office for appropriate additional procedures” (NAST 74).

Although most of the rest of Theatre Program Components do not apply to this thesis, there is this interesting bit though from section M. Flexibility and Innovation:  
“There are many ways to achieve excellence. Innovative and carefully planned experimentation is encouraged” (NAST 81). Then under section N. Quality we find “After

fundamental competencies have been achieved, judgments about quality are best made by professionals who are able to determine high levels of artistic and intellectual quality” (NAST 81). Taken together these two sections make a good argument for the implementation of the Masters of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company.

Now we arrive at the sections pertaining particularly to graduate studies with section XII. Graduate Programs In The Theatre. It states that a program must have clear purposes and publish how they logically and functionally relate to content, structure and requirements. The program must establish consistency in its specialization and curriculum.

In section XII.A.4.a. Creative Work and Inquiry the handbook states:

Professional work in theatre specializations is produced through creative endeavor, inquiry, and investigation. Each type of work and each individual work exhibits the integration of specific intent, content, methodology, and product. Individual or group decisions about these four elements shape the ways that creativity, inquiry, and investigation are used to produce work in various artistic, scholarly, pedagogical, or other specializations that results in contributions to the body of knowledge and practice in theatre. Competency to practice includes the ability to conduct the types of creative work, inquiry, and investigation normally associated with one or more fields of specialization (NAST 107).

Later in section XII.A.5. we find the definition of the type of degree proposed herein, “a. Practice-Oriented Degrees. These degrees focus on the preparation of actors, directors, designers, playwrights, technicians, managers, pedagogues, or other theatre professionals” (NAST 107). Following this are several sections and subsections about the breadth of knowledge that should be gained, the competence in its employment, its

synthesis across disciplines, the opportunities for its growth, and an understanding of the relational structures of the knowledge within and outside of the field.

Section 7. Preparations for the Professions includes provisions for Career Development encouraging entrepreneurial techniques, a specialty in the Regional Theatre, that will be an aspect of the apprenticeship/mentorship provided by the resident ensemble. This section also covers Teaching, another avenue of experience provided at CSC through the Shakesperience workshops and other opportunities within the educational department.

In the second following section, C. General Degree Requirements and Procedures, information about Comprehensive Reviews and Final Projects are covered. There needs to be one of each of these as required for graduation, the Comprehensive Review can take many forms and could conceivably be an oral defense of the performance process for a large role. The final project would be the thesis project and can take many forms but should include a written aspect “comparable to high level work presented to the public by professionals in the field” (NAST 110).

Most of XV. SPECIFIC TERMINAL DEGREES A. All Master of Fine Arts Degrees has been covered in the earlier criteria. The Handbook speaks to “exceptional skill in theatre practice and a well-developed personal aesthetic”, as well as “a breadth of understanding in theatre and any appropriate related disciplines, the ability to think independently, and to integrate and synthesize information associated with high levels of practice in an area of specialization” (NAST 113). The essential components for curricular structure are as follows: “Requirements to fulfill competency development in the major shall occupy at least 65% of the curriculum... Advanced, analytically- or academically-

oriented theatre studies... normally occupy at least 10% of the curriculum...opportunities for performance, production, and management experiences in a variety of formal and informal settings...experiences such as exposure to professional theatre productions, interaction with guest artists, and the programming of professional residencies (of individual artists or theatre companies) are critically important in the education of the M.F.A. student” (NAST 114). This section also restates the importance of published objectives, advisements, evaluation and retention.

Thus we end the examination of NAST standards. As evidenced, CSC provides much of what is required by the Association already. These are the day-to-day workings of the program, for the big picture institutional machinery a University Partnership is required. In the following chapter the proposed Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance will be presented in curricular structure, mission, vision, basic tenets, administration and staff, student learning outcomes, teaching objectives, thesis project, and preliminary program goal objective and action plans.

## CHAPTER 3 The Path

The final chapter will present the Master of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company. We will cover the mission, vision, basic tenets, student learning outcomes, teaching objectives, curriculum, faculty, thesis project, and preliminary program goal objective and action plans. The tone of the chapter will be based on publishable recruitment material and/or website information from the proposed program and is provisional by nature but apropos of the intended outcome.

### Mission

The mission of the Masters of Fine Arts in Classical Performance at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company is to provide professional hands-on training for the classical actor housed in a professional classical theatre with a Resident Ensemble Company. Through classroom training, practical onstage experience and mentorship with our Resident Ensemble Company we train the whole artist. The MFA at CSC develops curious, driven, deeply expressive, and vibrantly open creative artists and life long learners.

### Vision

The vision of the MFA at CSC is to codify the Cincinnati Shakespeare Company style of acting and apply it as a pedagogical system dedicated to developing the artist as a

member of an artistic community. It is based in the performance aesthetic often termed “character acting”, a physically transformational and uniquely theatrical style wedding the demands of classical performance with the intimacy and immediacy of contemporary expectations. This is a text-foundational approach without being textually dependent. We approach the text on its own terms from our own points of view, through exploration we aim to add to the received body of understanding, finding within the text congruities with contemporaneous experience. This will result in working actors who are self-starters and cultivators of culture, actors who are conduits for the revelation of universal connection.

We aim at nothing less than a revitalization of the American Regional Theatre movement. The Resident Ensemble Company is a group of seasoned professional regional actors, their wealth of knowledge and experience are a priceless asset. The MFA at CSC offers not only professional training and professional performance opportunities but unparalleled access to the wisdom of Equity actors modeling best practices in an actual work environment. The program design is centered on the mentorship of the Resident Ensemble Company to the MFA cohort.

Based in the classical repertory and intent on bringing immediacy and intimacy to its performance the curriculum is focused on the employment of the body and voice in service to the text. The relationship is reciprocal: as the text informs the actor the actor also stirs the text, pulling from within it her own experience. This is not a co-dependent association but rather a revelatory one, each discovering more about itself through service to the other. The text is an evolving idea cluster, semiotically fluid and open to growth. Having diligently performed the traditional textual analysis of the syntax, the poetic

structure, the historical and literary allusions, the imagery and context and arriving at a place of understanding the actor gives himself over to a physical exploration. It is here she finds the physical experience of the text through improvisational exercises; here she explores the sounds in the text, their range, and their emotive wellspring. Here the actor explores the outer edge of performance to see what the text contains within his instrument, he explodes the text to find where it is not, exposing the boundary of its meaning. Having moved through the text to a place of nonsense the actor returns to the starting place full of the experience, its shadows flickering on the cave wall of the performance. In this way we attempt to bring a fuller experience to the young actor, what they lack in chronology they make up for in imaginative and physical creative exploration.

The vision also extends outward, as the actor has a reciprocal relationship with the text, she carries on a similar relationship with her scene partner, with the Resident Ensemble as a whole. The Resident Ensemble has the same relationship with the audience and the audience with the rest of the community. Artists respond to that they are connected to; we must maintain strong connections to the all aspects of the community.

It is a primary belief of the MFA at CSC that theatre is a service to society. The arts have a responsibility to make their worth known by reaching out to diverse and underserved audiences, in order to manifest that worth we participate in community engagement through our education programming, through partnering with other organizations, and encouraging everyone in our organization to volunteer in the community. Our vision of the Regional Theatre is one where the art is local, where it grows from engagement in and reaction to what is happening in the artists' community.

## The Tenets

We are meaning-making machines, our stories are our product and they reflect our experiences and react to them. The art we make is our selves; it is the frame within which we contextualize our lives. This art-frame of the communal self is necessarily malleable and adhesive; it can stretch to encompass seemingly antithetical ideas, it can shrink to squash that from which it is made, it will grab concepts unrelated to each other and combine them into one meaning, it will create connection through juxtaposition, it will reveal congruities by highlighting the incongruous. We are Hamlet's mirror held up to ourselves. Reflected there is only relative to the eye of the beholder.

Our school is predicated on these five basic tenets:

1. Chops: One is not taught acting; one practices the craft, honing it through experience in time spent on task.
2. Readiness: We train the instrument and the intellect; we give instruction on the use of tools and model best practices, we prepare the actor to respond.
3. Self: The actor's instrument is the body; from the body the voice is produced, within the body the intellect is housed, stimuli affect the body and are responded to in a theatrical context. Stimuli include but are not limited to text, scene partners, the audience, the set, costumes, props, lights, sound, the space, direction, and interruption.

4. Other: The performing artist needs an audience, without an audience one cannot act.

The actor's job is to reveal what it means to be human. The most effective way to achieve that is within the context of community. The community within which we chose to make this revelation is bifurcated; one part we term Ensemble the other we term Audience.

Neither can exist within this structure without the other.

5. Do: Application of training requires synthesis. The mode of learning at the MFA at CSC is synthesis-based action; learning by doing. The performing artist must be on stage in front of a real audience to apply their training; this application will be periodically and formally adjudicated and calibrated by the artist, her community, and her mentor.

### Proposed Curriculum

Curriculum breakdown for the MFA at CSC; 60 credit hours in four semesters

Fall Semester 1; 15 credit hours:

THEA 501 Text Analysis: 3 credit hours

THEA 511 Vocal Production: 3 credit hours

THEA 521 Movement for the Performer: 3 credit hours

THEA 531 Educational Performance: 3 credit hours

THEA 541 Understudy: 3 credit hours

Spring Semester 2; 15 credit hours:

THEA 502 Text Analysis: 3 credit hours

THEA 512 Voice of the Character: 3 credit hours

THEA 522 Movement of the Character: 3 credit hours

THEA 532 Educational Production: 3 credit hours

THEA 542 Understudy: 3 credit hours

Fall Semester 3; 15 credit hours:

THEA 561 Theatre History and Analysis I: 3 credit hours

THEA 571 Acting Class: 3 credit hours

THEA 551 Apprenticeship: 3 credit hours

THEA 533 Educational Performance: 3 credit hours

THEA 543 Professional Internship: 3 credit hours

Spring Semester 4; 15 credit hours:

THEA 562 Theatre History and Analysis II: 3 credit hours

THEA 551 Shakespeare Pedagogy: 3 credit hours

THEA 534 Educational Performance: 3 credit hours

THEA 544 Professional Internship: 3 credit hours

THEA 591 Thesis Project: 3 credit hours

The requirement for graduation includes the completion of sixty credit hours required over four semesters to earn the degree. Each semester consists of fifteen credit hours; nine of those hours are in the core classes and six hours in the laboratory environment of performance and understudy. The core classes consist of two consecutive semesters of Text Analysis, a semester of Vocal Production followed by a semester of Voice of the Character, a semester of Movement for the Performer followed by a semester of Movement of the Character, two semesters of Theatre History and Analysis, one semester of The Acting Class, a semester of Shakespeare Pedagogy, a semester of Apprenticeship, a semester of work on the Thesis Project. There are also two consecutive semesters of Understudy, two consecutive semesters of Professional Internship, and four consecutive semesters of Educational Production.

There are biweekly cohort meetings with each class that serve as a check in and a challenge. These meetings are directed by the Program Director and have set agendas: to take care of house cleaning and interpersonal issues, to answer questions and deal with concerns, and to set goals and make intra-cohort assessments. Each semester there will be two formal individual meetings with the Program Director to assess student progress both academic and artistic. There is an open door policy to promote student access to all faculty, to the Resident Ensemble, to the staff at CSC, and to the head of the program. Faculty representatives will attend bi-weekly performances of the Two Hours Traffic performances as well as any performances of main stage productions when a student is performing an understudy role for the first time. This process of adjudication will provide the basis for

assessment in the Understudy and Educational Performance classes and will be the central topic of discussion during the individual meetings with the Program Director.

### Curriculum Details

The first year curriculum is Text Analysis, Vocal Production, Movement for the Performer, Voice of the Character, Movement of the Character, Educational Production, and Understudy.

#### Text Analysis

Each Text Analysis class uses Shakespearian text as the core of study. This is table work, bookwork, and intellectual understanding; we analyze the text in order to realize it in the body. The first semester class deals with First Folio, verse structure, the ingredients of language, definitions, punctuation, length of thought, the simple sentence and antithesis. The second semester builds on this to include irony, ambiguity, layers of meaning, and modern congruencies. This semester also includes analysis of Greek Theatre, Jacobean, Johnson, Moliere, Shaw, Chekhov, and Marlowe.

#### Voice

The Voice progression is designed to allow the ideas uncovered in Text Analysis to ring forth; to this end we condition the instrument and deepen our understanding of it before we dive into text. The first semester, Vocal Production, uses the Linklater Progression concurrently with Estill Voicework. In the later part of the semester we begin ear training

and vocal ladders. The second semester class, Voice of the Character, continues the work from the first semester while tackling tonality, vocal extreme, IPA, RP, Cockney, and Welsh dialects.

### Movement

The Movement progression exists to get the text into the body. To that end the first semester, Movement for the Actor, begins with exploration of the self and the use of self with the Alexander Technique. Units include Neutral Mask, Animal, Mime, Clown, and an introduction to anchoring gesture as we add text to round out the first semester. The second semester, Movement of the Character, continues the work on the Alexander Technique and anchoring gesture while adding boundaries of character, Lecoq's Buffon, period dance, and stage combat.

### Understudy

Students will understudy at least one large role in each mainstage production, if there are weekday matinees for the production students will have the opportunity to perform the role onstage. The student will attend as many rehearsals as possible; the intent is for the understudy to appropriate the blocking, choices, beats, and spirit of the performance without it being an impersonation. The performance should appear authentic to the work of the Understudy without unduly adding to or detracting from the work of the understudied. The Understudy will be a member of the Equity Membership Candidacy (EMC) program and accrue points for performing. Understudies will be provided with stage management

scripts to record blocking and take notes in. There will be one understudy rehearsal per production. Formal individual introductions and scheduling will be set before the first day of rehearsal, after opening weekend individual meetings will be held with a member of the stage management staff to ensure blocking is recorded correctly before the understudy rehearsal is held. The first performance of an understudied role will be attended and adjudicated by a faculty representative.

#### Educational Production

The Two Hours Traffic program tours two simply produced professional quality productions of in-secondary-school-curriculum Shakespeare plays within two hours of Cincinnati to over twenty four thousand school children annually. This is the major performance opportunity for the MFA program. There will be unannounced bi-weekly adjudications by faculty representatives on site. While these tours are part of the student's education, they are themselves educational; there is a great responsibility herein. While a privilege to perform, these productions are professional, the lessons are deep, the audiences honest, and the experience will be a full one with positive and negative facets testing you every day in the trenches of the American Regional Theatre. It is a gift and a challenge; it will change the way you look at performing.

The second year curriculum is Theatre History and Analysis One and Two, The Acting Class, Shakespeare Pedagogy, Apprenticeship, Educational Performance, Professional Internship, and Thesis Project.

## Acting

In the second year The Acting Class builds off of the foundation of the Text, Voice, and Movement classes from the first two semesters. The work from those classes is applied to scene work from Shakespeare and others including Jacobean, Greek, Wilde, Melodrama, Shaw, Strindberg, Johnson, and Molière.

## Apprenticeship

Depending on the interests of the student this class can take many forms. Under the guidance of the Program Director each student will apprentice in an area of the day-to-day operations of CSC. The opportunities include Assistant Directing, Education, Dramaturgy, Marketing, Development, Management, Assistant to the Artistic Director, Assistant Design, Scene Construction, Tour Management, and Patron Services. The written aspect of this credit becomes the backbone for the Thesis Project next semester.

## History

Theatre History and Analysis covers the history of the theatre and contemporary analysis of history as we mine the past to contextualize the present. As Shakespeare's history plays reflected attitudes and politics of his time, this class will look at theatre history through a similar lens, not only what "was" but what how that is congruent with what "is". The first section looks at Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period and modern modes of thought framing the period. The second section takes a global perspective of theatre history looking

at Asian, African, Native American, and indigenous theatrical history and its appropriation and application.

### Shakespeare Pedagogy

This class is focused on how to teach Shakespeare. Starting simply with a hook that grabs the students, the teacher of Shakespeare has to have many tools at his disposal. This class will provide those tools as well as strategies to entice student interest that leads to engagement with the Bard. Units include Games, Performance, Poetry, Plots, Secondary School, Primary School, Hostile Audiences, and Transferring the Value of History.

### Educational Production

See above.

### Professional Internship

The Professional Internship is a season of work at CSC on the mainstage. Each student is guaranteed two roles, one per semester, and may have as many as ten. The student will acquire EMC points with the possibility of joining Equity by the end of the season. The written requirement for these credits will be applicable to the Thesis Project.

### Thesis Project

The Thesis Project can take several forms including a book, a website, a film, a play, a live performance. Based on the written requirements from the Apprenticeship and the

Professional Internship, the Thesis Project is a collective documentation of and response to the operation of CSC as a professional regional classical theatre. It is invaluable to the organization and to the cohort. The central aim of the Thesis Project is to mindfully process and synthesize the training of the MFA in a recordable format, it is meant to be a collective expression by the artists in the cohort of Hamlet's Mirror.

#### Programmatic Student Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to identify and implement the structure of Shakespeare's verse.

The student will be able to evaluate the difference between various editions of Shakespearian texts and be able to discern the value of each as pertaining to the performance of a role.

The student will be able to make textually informed choices that manifest in action on stage.

The student will be able to express him or herself physically in a clear and concise manner.

The student will attain a rich voice with a wide range and be able to apply it to the text.

The student will be able to analyze Shakespearian text for playable action.

The student will be able to communicate the concepts within Shakespearian text clearly to a wide audience.

The student will have participated in a body of work that has been honed to the professional level.

The student will have participated in long runs of productions on tour.

### Programmatic Teaching Objectives

The student will understand their role in a company and the role of the company in the community.

The student will value the wisdom of mentors.

The student will understand the realities of the theatrical market and the worth of creating work that connects across disciplines.

The student will understand Theatre as a matrix of disciplines, and that these disciplines are able to reveal more working in conjunction than would be possible as solitary modes.

The student will be driven to create theater that is contextualized by their community.

The student will drive the future of the American Regional Theatre.

### Faculty Structure

The program at CSC would be run by the Program Director, there would be two other faculty members drawn from the Resident Ensemble at Adjunct status. The Company Manager would facilitate all paperwork between the University and CSC that was outside the parameters of the Program Director. There would be guest lecturers from the Resident Ensemble from time to time in every class. Any Guest Artists in the Company, directors, designers, fight choreographers, and actors would be approached to lead Master Classes.

The goals of the program are to graduate a cultural vanguard that will drive the future of theatre in this country as a vital community-centric institution. The objective at this point is to make this thesis manifest. To reach this objective we begin with the action plan of presenting this thesis to the leadership structure at CSC, then to the board for

ratification. The next objective would be to seek out a University or Collegiate institution with whom which to partner. Once such a partner is secured, we negotiate on a letter of agreement. Following this we create detailed budgets, develop and train the faculty and staff, make an announcement in the press, further develop curricula from this thesis, recruit an initial class, and begin classes.

Works Cited

"College of Fine Arts." *MFA in Theatre: Acting*. Illinois State University, n.d. Web. Feb.-Mar. 2013.

Denver Center Theatre Company. *National Theatre Conservatory 2010/2011 Master of Fine Arts*. Denver: Denver Center Theatre, 2009. Print.

Moore, John. "Denver Center Shocker." *The Denver Post*. N.p., 20 Feb. 2010. Web. Feb.-Mar. 2013.

"NAST Handbook 2012-2013." *National Association of Schools of Theatre Handbook 2012-2013* (2012): n. pag. Print.

"Old Globe / USD MFA Program." *Old Globe / USD MFA Program*. The Old Globe Theatre Company, n.d. Web. Feb.-Mar. 2013.

"Shakespeare and Performance." *Shakespeare Shakespeare and Performance Comments*. Mary Baldwin College, n.d. Web. Feb.-Mar. 2013.

"American Academy of Classical Acting." *Shakespeare Theatre MFA Program Comments*. Shakespeare Theatre, n.d. Web. Feb.-Mar. 2013.

United States. Department of Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. "2009 Return of

Organization Exempt from Income Tax (Form 990): Cincinnati Shakespeare Company." *990 Finder*. Foundation Center, 2006. Web. 10 February 2013

United States. Department of Treasury. Internal Revenue Service. "2010 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax (Form 990): Cincinnati Shakespeare Company." *990 Finder*. Foundation Center, 2006. Web. 10 February 2013

APPENDIX

Complete list of Young Company Members with terminal degrees noted

2001-2002

Angela Goshen

Chris Guthrie

Leanna Heiber

Elise Hedbloom

Danny Taylor

Michael Ingersoll

Jason Bruffy

2002-2003

Jeffrey Bower MFA

Taylor Mahogany Scott MFA

Jeremy Aggers

Ghillian Porter

Reggie Jernigan

2003-2004

Kathryn Lawson

Bavish Patel

Kevin Pierson

Zach Whittington

Nancy Eyerman

Christopher Zorker

2004-2005

Rob Jansen

Josh Neth

Jeff Sanders MFA

Kate Berry

Anita Ross MFA

Kelly Menglekoach

Jeff Rice

2005-2006

Jeff Sanders MFA

Rob Jansen

Hayley Clark

Sarah Goff

John Bromels

Kelly Menglekoeh

2006-2007

Miranda McGee

Justin McCombs

Sara Clark

Hayley Clark

Josh Stamoolis

Andy Kurtland

Alicia Rhodis

2007-2008

Justin McCombs

Sara Clark

Jess Rotherth

Josh Stamoolis

Billy Chase

Alex Brooks

Derek Ledbetter

2008-2009

Justin McCombs

Sara Clark

Billy Chase

Anne Marie Carrol

Josh Stamoolis

Kris Stoker MFA

2009-2010

Jolin Polasek

Billy Chase

Josh Stamoolis

Kris Stoker MFA

Sara Clark

Lauren Leroux

Jeremy Larson

2010-2011

Lauren Leroux

Jolin Polasek

Ian Bond

John Scheller

Cary Davenport

Miranda McGee

2011-2012

Darnell Benjamin MFA

Maggie Lou Rader

Jolin Polasek

Audrey Bertaux Skeirik

Ian Bond

Cary Davenport

Miranda McGee

2012-2013

Sam Rabinovitz

Travis Emery

Charlie Cromer

Zach Schute

Maggie Lou Raider

Jessie Goodman

2013-2014

Zach Schute

Charlie Cromer

Maggie Lou Raider

Matt Lytle

Caitlin McEweny

VITA

Matthew Lewis Johnson was born in Georgetown, Kentucky December fifth, nineteen seventy-three. A natural born citizen of the United States of America, Matthew holds a BA from Morehead State University with a major in Theatre and a double minor in Studio Art and Creative Writing. Matthew was a resident puppeteer at the Center for Puppetry Arts from 1999-2002 and a member of the Resident Ensemble Company at Cincinnati Shakespeare Company from 2002-2010 where he also held the positions of Company Manager, Artistic Associate, and Associate Artistic Director.